THE EFFECT OF WEATHER ON CROPS AND FARMING OPERATIONS, FEBRUARY, 1926

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General Summary.—Temperatures during February were generally favorable for agricultural interests, except that the warm weather prematurely advanced fruit buds in the Southern States, especially in the area between the lower Mississippi Valley and the Rocky Mountains, and in the Pacific coast sections. Throughout the trans-Mississippi States the month was nearly ideal for outdoor seasonal operations and plowing and preparations for spring planting made splendid progress in central and southern districts; in the North the warm, springlike weather permitted livestock to graze freely on the range, with a consequent saving of much feed.

East of the Mississippi River there was much interruption to field work by wet weather, especially in the Southern States, and at the close of the month preparations for spring planting had become somwhat behind an average season, though seeding made good progress in Florida during the latter part. In the Pacific Coast States substantial rainfall the latter part of January and early in February was very beneficial, and vegetation, under the influence of increased moisture and continued warm weather, made unusually rapid advance. The month was also favorable for livestock interests throughout the great western grazing sections.

Small grains.—While there was very little protection by snow over much of the Winter Wheat Belt, February, in general, was rather favorable for fall-sown grains. There was no material harm from heaving in the eastern belt, but at the same time late-sown wheat in that area showed rather poor condition. In parts of the Plains States, particularly in the western portion, more moisture was needed, but winter wheat was benefited by rain or snow during the latter half of the month. The seeding of spring oats made slow progress in Southeastern States, but good advance was reported from the Southwest, with this work nearly finished in Oklahoma at the close

of the month. Some spring wheat was seeded in the northern Great Plains considerably earlier than usual.

Corn and cotton.—In the Southeastern States plowing and preparation for planting corn and cotton were considerably interrupted by frequent rains and continued wet weather, but in the west Gulf area and southern Great Plains conditions were more favorable and much plowing was accomplished. Corn planting was active in Florida the latter part of the month, and some had come up at the close. There was also a small amount of cotton planted in the extreme southern portions of the

Pastures and miscellaneous crops.—In east Gulf States pastures made fair progress, and good advance was reported from west Gulf sections, except that rain was needed in northern and western Texas. The range was in good condition in the Great Plains region, and rains or snows were very beneficial in most sections west of the Rocky Mountains, especially in the Pacific coast area. The mild temperatures and absence of severe storms were generally favorable for livestock over the western half of the country, and they were in mostly good to excellent

Fruit trees advanced prematurely in the Southern States, with the blooming of early varieties general in most southern districts at the close of the month, and peaches were beginning to bloom as far north as the Fort Valley district of Georgia. In the Pacific Coast States the warm weather prematurely advanced buds, with almond and lemon trees in full bloom, and other early varieties of fruit coming into bloom in southern portions.

Hardy truck crops made fairly good advance in the Southeast, but spring planting was considerably interrupted. Some potatoes were planted, however, as far north as the eastern shore of Virginia. In the southern trans-Mississippi States the seeding of early spring crops progressed favorably and some gardens were made as far north as Kansas. At the close of the month, however, rain was needed in much of the west Gulf area.